

**OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS**

**Routing Slip**

STAT

	ACTION	INFO
1. D/OCA		
2. DD/OCA		
3. D/Legislation		
4. D/Senate Liaison		
5. D/House Liaison		
6. D/Congressional Support		
7. Admin		
8. Constituent Inquiries Officer		
9. FOIA Officer		
10. <span style="border: 1px solid black; display: inline-block; width: 150px; height: 1.2em; vertical-align: middle;"></span>		X
11.		
12.		

SUSPENSE

Date

Action Officer:

Remarks:

*Completed*

**26 DEC 1989**

*OCA #4229-89*

AJP 28Nov89

Name/Date

STAT

**OFFICE OF CONGRESSIONAL AFFAIRS****Routing Slip**

	ACTION	INFO
1. D/OCA		X
2. DD/OCA		X
3. D/Legislation		X
4. D/Senate Liaison		X
5. D/House Liaison	X	
6. D/Congressional Support		X
7. Admin		
8. Constituent Inquiries Officer		
9. FOIA Officer		
10. <input type="text"/>		X
11. <input type="text"/>		
12. <input type="text"/>		

STAT

SUSPENSE

14Dec89

Date

Action Officer: 

Remarks:

DCI will sign with input from DDI

AJP 30Nov89

Name/Date

STAT

ROUTING SLIP

TO:

		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDCI		X		
3	D/ICS				
4	DDA				
5	DDI		X		
6	DDO				
7	DDP&C				
8	DDS&T				
9	IG				
10	COMPT				
11	D/OCA	X			
12	GC				
13	Chm/NIC		X		
14	D/PAO				
15	COUNSEL/DCI				
16	D/SOVA/DI		X		
17	NIO/USSR		X		
18	NIO/W		X		
19	NIO/GPF		X		
20	NIO/SP		X		
21	D/OSWR		X		
22					
SUSPENSE		Date			

Remarks

Per OCA -- a response will be prepared for DCI's signature with input from DDI.

ER 89-4734

*[Signature]*  
Executive Secretary  
30 Nov '89

Date

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## U.S. House of Representatives

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Washington, DC 20515

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November 27, 1989

OCA FILE HASC \*  
 REP ASPIN

Honorable William C. Webster  
 Director  
 Central Intelligence Agency  
 Washington, D.C. 20505

Dear Director Webster:

Over the past year and a half, the House Armed Services Committee has been monitoring closely the impact that Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's policies have had upon the Soviet military. The Committee has received many intelligence briefings. As you know, I led a delegation to Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, accompanied by your NIO for the Soviet Union as well as non-governmental experts.

You are also familiar with my past efforts to foster an informed, open debate about changing Soviet military capabilities. While my personal efforts were unsuccessful, recent press reports -- including new CIA estimates of declining Soviet defense budgets and increased warning time of a Warsaw Pact attack -- suggest that U.S. intelligence estimates of Soviet military capabilities are entering a new era of glasnost.

The changing nature of the Soviet threat has already influenced Secretary Cheney's preparations for next year's defense budget. I think it is critical that the American people, as well as the Congress, have the most accurate information possible about what has changed -- and has not changed -- in the Warsaw Pact's military capabilities as we made decisions about how to allocate increasingly scarce resources in a context of great uncertainty.

Consequently, I request that the Intelligence Community make a presentation to the House Armed Services Committee on the state of Soviet (and Warsaw Pact) military capabilities. It should follow the same format as its annual statement on the Soviet

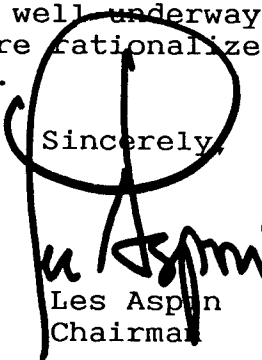
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economy to the Joint Economic Committee -- an unclassified statement followed by open and closed testimony. I would also ask that the statement be made in late January or early February so that we can complete our assessment of the threat before the Secretary of Defense submits the defense authorization bill. This timing is essential.

As Secretary Cheney's recent statements underscore, we face a daunting task for the next several years, namely how to make decisions on our defense requirements under tight budgetary constraints and in the face of rapid, but uncertain, change in the Soviet bloc. The Congress will be under great pressure to reduce our defense spending. We need as much reliable and authoritative information in the public domain as possible to ensure that we make the right choices and can explain those choices to the American people. An annual assessment by the U.S. intelligence community of trends in the Soviet bloc's military capabilities is, in my view, the best and most appropriate way of obtaining it.

I understand that such a statement by the Intelligence Community will be unprecedented. But I think you will agree that a process of piecemeal declassification of information about the Soviet threat is already well underway. I think it would be far better if the process were rationalized and institutionalized. I hope that you will agree.

Sincerely,

  
Les Aspin  
Chairman

LA:cm

The Washington Post \_\_\_\_\_  
 The New York Times \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Washington Times \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Wall Street Journal \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Christian Science Monitor \_\_\_\_\_  
 New York Daily News \_\_\_\_\_  
 USA Today \_\_\_\_\_  
 The Chicago Tribune \_\_\_\_\_  
L.A. TIMES B7  
 Date 27 NOV 89

# Let the Defense Debate Out of the Bag

■ **Military:** Bush's business-as-usual crowd needs to acknowledge that our needs are changing and Gorbachev-driven.

By LES ASPIN

The debate concluded this fall over the fiscal 1990 defense budget was the last of its kind. It was driven by the federal deficit, by pressure to increase spending in other areas and by President Bush's vow—"read my lips"—of no new taxes.

These arguments had little to do with what is happening in the Soviet Union. But we've entered a new era, the Mikhail Gorbachev era. The next defense budget will be Gorbachev-driven, and the next debate will reflect that; in fact, it's already begun.

Who could watch news footage of the destruction of the Berlin Wall and fail to realize that something momentous was under way? These events are going to have a tremendous psychological and political impact in this country. And you can bet that the impact will not generate support for increasing defense budgets.

Defense Secretary Dick Cheney, at least, is beginning to get the message. And that's a start.

Elsewhere, however, the Bush Administration has proved less than a model of farsightedness. Some elements in the Administration and some of its supporters have seemed reluctant to admit that there has been any change at all that might affect our defense budget.

With mixed signals like these from the Administration, any resemblance to a rational defense debate is purely accidental.

Figuring out what's happening with the Soviet Union's defense budget isn't easy under any circumstances. But from the indicators we can measure—tank production, for instance—Soviet defense spending does seem to have tipped over into decline. And, according to press accounts, the CIA has concluded that the Soviet defense budget for 1989 is smaller than the one for 1988.

Another important element in the debate is the military situation in Eastern Europe. Gorbachev announced last December at the United Nations that the Soviet Union would make significant force withdrawals from Eastern Europe: six divisions, 50,000 men and 5,300 tanks.

Experts who accompanied the House Armed Services Committee during a trip to East Germany and the Soviet Union last August concluded that these withdrawals and the restructuring of units left behind would reduce the aggregate combat power of Warsaw Pact forces by as much as 20% to 25%. This, in turn, would significantly reduce the ability of these forces to mount large-scale offensive actions.

Other barometers are strategic nuclear weaponry and regional conflicts. The Soviets continue their across-the-board strategic modernization program, but at a reduced pace. This does not mean, however, that Soviet spending on strategic forces is up, as Vice President Dan Quayle has said.

In regional conflicts, the overall record today is a mixed bag at best. Soviet troops are out of Afghanistan. But some advisers probably remain and military assistance is

way up. Vietnamese forces appear to have left Cambodia. But Soviet assistance has doubled. About half of the Cuban forces have left Angola. But Soviet military advisers remain and aid is undiminished.

In this hemisphere, Gorbachev has apparently cut direct shipments of lethal weapons to Nicaragua. But shipments from other Soviet Bloc countries are up.

In short, Soviet means—especially the use of troops and surrogate forces—appear to have changed, but it is not at all clear that Soviet ends have changed.

No one said that dealing with this was going to be easy. Still, we should be doing it with a smile. After all, it may mean that peace has broken out. The President should now do these things:

—He should tell the business-as-usual crowd in his Administration to put a lid on it if they can't bring themselves to discuss what's really going on. If he doesn't, he'll squander what credibility he has.

—He should trust the American people to make the correct decision, when given correct information.

—He should uncork the intelligence bottleneck and provide that information to the American people.

It can be done without compromising intelligence sources and methods. The information concerning Soviet defense objectives and our response is already coming out, but in a piecemeal way that defies understanding. That's folly. Let's start leveling with the American people. Then we can begin to set sensible defense priorities.

*Les Aspin (D-Wis.) is chairman of the House Armed Services Committee.*